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PP RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHAR #2240/01 2960721  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 230721Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5565  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 002240

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [GH](#)  
SUBJECT: GHANA POLITICAL ROUNDUP

REF: ACCRA 1757

¶1. SUMMARY: As the 2008 presidential/parliamentary elections approach, two smaller parties - the Convention People's Party (CPP) and the People's National Convention (PNC) - are determining their respective Presidential candidates. Meanwhile, Ghanaian political observers are increasingly concerned by the massive sums of money already evident in the campaign, and Ghana election officials are undergoing training in administering elections. Internationally, President Kufuor has publicly highlighted the importance of improving trade relations with China, and condemned the recent killing of African Union (AU) peacekeepers in Sudan. Ghana will host an AU Ministerial on October 26 and 27 which will focus on promoting African unity. END SUMMARY.

CPP opens Nominations

¶2. On October 8, the Convention People's Party (CPP) opened nominations to determine the party's candidate for the 2008 presidential elections. Despite a weak showing in the past two presidential/parliamentary elections, the CPP has gained increased attention for 2008 due to the presence of several high-profile personalities contesting the CPP presidential nomination. On October 22, nominations will close and vetting of the aspirants will begin. In addition to nominating the presidential candidate, party delegates will also elect senior party officials. Four candidates have announced their interest in seeking the nomination including former Minister for Public Sector Reform Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduoum and prominent pathologist and former Ghana Health Service Director General Dr. Agyeman Badu Akosa (reftel).

Ghanaian concerns over NPP money

¶3. Several civil society groups and prominent individuals allege that NPP presidential candidates are using money and gifts to influence potential party delegates, party executives and journalists ahead of the NPP's December Congress. Former Minister of Trade Alan Kyerematen has received most of the criticism due to his flamboyant road shows and lavish advertisements as well as the perception that he is President Kufuor's favorite for NPP nominee. President Kufuor, however, has publicly stated that he is not supporting Kyerematen.

Peoples National Convention (PNC) to hold Congress

¶4. The Peoples National Convention (PNC) will hold its Congress in Bolgatanga from November 30 to December 2 to elect its 2008 presidential candidate and national officers. The PNC is taking nominations from October 10-30. In addition to selecting candidates, the Congress will consider PNC policy positions and possible constitutional amendments.

EC officers prepare for 2008 elections

¶5. Nearly 200 election officers of the Electoral Commission (EC)

are undergoing a series of training courses designed by the African Association of Electoral Authorities to sharpen their skills in election administration ahead of the 2008 elections. The courses opened on October 8 and EC Chairman Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Djan said the sessions will lend additional credibility to the election. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is funding the training.

#### Ghana to pursue deeper trade relationship with China

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¶6. On October 9, President Kufuor said Ghana would pursue deeper trade relationships with China, adding that China has plenty to offer African countries. President Kufuor, speaking during the Economist Conference Roundtable in Accra, said Ghana would work hard to tap into China's expertise. President Kufuor also commended China's approach to Africa, citing examples in infrastructure development and especially the road sector. He said China's bids in international tenders are more competitive than bids from European countries or the U.S. He added that Ghana would continue to work closely with all of its partners.

#### Ghana condemns killing of African Union Peacekeepers

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¶7. On October 4, President Kufuor, wearing his hat as Chairman of the African Union (AU), condemned the killing of 10 AU Peacekeepers serving in Sudan's Darfur Region and gave the assurance that this act would not deter Africa from pushing ahead with the goal of bringing peace to all troubled spots on the Continent. The soldiers (seven from Nigeria and one each from Senegal, Botswana and Mali) died following an attack on the African Union Mission's (AMIS) Haskanita Camp by a group of heavily armed men. Eight others were seriously wounded. Jointly addressing the AU Commission and its Permanent Representatives in Addis Ababa, President Kufuor said in

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order to prevent such acts from occurring again, the UN must expedite action on the deployment of the "Heavy Support Package" to AMIS and the AU-UN Hybrid Force to Darfur.

#### Ghana to host African Ministerial Committee Meeting

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¶8. On October 26 and 27, Ghana will host the AU Ministerial Committee Meeting. Briefing African Ambassadors on October 4, Minister of Foreign Affairs Akwasi Osei Adjei said the meeting would address the African unity theme discussed at the June AU Summit in Accra. Adjei said the Ministers would look at the need for collective responses to major global issues, the creation of an African Common Market and involving more African people in economic and political integration of the continent. He also said the Ministerial would discuss the Abuja Economic Treaty, the Constitutive Act and the Political and Economic integration process.

¶9. The Ministerial Committee is made up of 10 members plus Ghana as Committee Chair. The remainder of the committee is composed of two member states from each of the five sub-regions. Currently, West Africa is represented by Nigeria and Senegal, East Africa by Ethiopia and Uganda, Southern Africa by Botswana and South Africa, North Africa by Egypt and Libya, and Central Africa by Cameroon and Gabon.

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